

Message Text

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73

ACTION EA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-01 INR-07 L-02

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 OMB-01

IO-10 /065 W

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R 051105Z MAR 75

FM AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1314

C O N F I D E N T I A L BANGKOK 3694

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINR, TH

SUBJ: THE THAI POLITICAL CONUNDRUM

1. AT A FAREWELL LUNCHEON GIVEN ME BY THE SEATO COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES, I HAD A LONG CONVERSATION WITH PHAN WANNAMETHEE, UNDER SECRETARY OF STATE, MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS, ON A NUMBER OF SUBJECTS. I WENT TO GREAT LENGTH TO GIVE HIM BACKGROUND ON THE TEMCO CASE AND TOLD HIM THAT I WOULD EXPRESS MY STRONG CONCERN OVER THIS ISSUE IN A LETTER TO THE PRIME MINISTER IMMEDIATELY AFTER THE VOTE OF CONFIDENCE. THE GOVERNMENT'S POLICY POSITION WILL BE DEBATED POINT-BY-POINT ON THURSDAY, MARCH 6. THE POSITION WILL BE ACCEPTED OR REJECTED AS A WHOLE ON A VOTE BY THE ASSEMBLY WHICH IS LIKELY TO TAKE PLACE ON FRIDAY, MARCH 7. THE OUTCOME OF THE VOTE IS STILL VERY MUCH IN DOUBT. IT IS QUITE POSSIBLE THAT MANY FENCE SITTERS WILL ABSTAIN FROM VOTING, PARTICULARLY IF THERE IS AN OPEN VOTE, SO AS TO ABSOLVE THEMSELVES OF ANY ADVERSE CONSEQUENCES.

2. AS PLAN EXPRESSED IT TO ME, SENI'S CABINET WILL NOT ASSUME FULL RESPONSIBILITY UNTIL AFTER THE VOTE. IN THE EVENT THE VOTE IS NEGATIVE AN ANOMALOUS SITUATION WILL BE CREATED. SENI
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WILL REMAIN AS PRIME MINISTER AND HIS CABINET

WILL BECOME A CARETAKER GOVERNMENT WITHOUT
AUTHORITY TO INTRODUCE ITS PROGRAM AND WILL REMAIN
IN OFFICE UNTIL, IF AND WHEN A NEW PRIME MINISTER
IS ELECTED BY THE HOUSE. IN THAT EVENTUALITY,
SENI WILL BE OUT BUT HIS CABINET WILL CONTINUE IN
OFFICE UNTIL A NEW CABINET IS FORMED AND IS PRE-
SENTED TO THE KONG AND PROFFERS THEIR OATH OF
ALLEGIANCE TO HIM. THIS KIND OF A LABYRINTH IS
UNUSUAL, EVEN FOR THAILAND.

3. AT THE LUNCHEON WHICH WAS HOSTED BY THE BRITISH
AMBASSADOR, THE SECRETARY GENERAL AND OTHER COUNCIL
REPRESENTATIVES ALL EXPRESSED GRAVE CONCERN OVER
THE SITUATION IN CAMBODIA.
KINTNER

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